

CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

TO THE SOUTH SHORE ESTUARY RESERVE COUNCIL

CAC Meeting Minutes

May 14, 2019

7:00-9:00 p.m.

Seatuck Environmental Center
550 South Bay Ave, Islip, NY 11751

Present:

Artie Kopelman, Coastal Research and Education Society of Long Island (CRESLI)
Marshall Brown, Save the Great South Bay
Allison DePerte, Atlantic Marine Conservation Society
Maryanne Webb, Town of Oyster Bay
Sally Kellogg, NYS DOS/Reserve Office
Angie Sowers, US Army Corps of Engineers
Brian Bogle, US Army Corps of Engineers
Maureen Dolan Murphy, Chair CAC/Citizens Campaign for the Environment
Jeremy Campbell, NYS DOS/Reserve Coordinator
Brian Schneider, Nassau County Department of Parks and Public Works
Ryan Hodgetts, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation
Rachel Neville, NYS DOS/Reserve Office
Christie Pfoertner, NYS DOS/Reserve Office
Lesley Kane, Islip Town Lease Holders Association
Judi Bird, League of Women Voters Brookhaven
Kaetlyn Jackson, National Park Service, Fire Island National Seashore
Kyle Rabin, LI Regional Planning Council/LINAP
Maureen Dunn, Seatuck Association
Scott Sanderson, US Army Corps of Engineers

1. Introductions

M. Dolan Murphy called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. and introductions were made.

2. Presentation: Western Bays Back Bays Study

S. Sanderson of US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) discussed the status report on the Nassau County Back Bays Study that was posted in April and is available on the USACE website. The status report included information on work completed to date, potential alternatives under consideration, an overview on the study process, and details on next steps. Nassau County was identified as a high-risk focus area based on the North Atlantic Coast Comprehensive Study which was completed in response to Hurricane Sandy. The USACE, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, and Nassau County are all partners for this project. The purpose of the Nassau County Back Bays feasibility study is to investigate potential ways to reduce the risk to people, critical infrastructure, and businesses caused by coastal storms. The North/South boundaries are defined by the 500-year floodplain and the East/West boundaries are more dynamic; the study area is larger than the project area and modeling data is being taken from Queens to western Suffolk County to get a more comprehensive picture of the project area. Closing inlets may not lower water in the back bays to desired levels. An Environmental Impact Statement will be integrated into the feasibility study and a document will be released for public comment in about a year. The Coastal Barrier Resources Act (CBRA) limits federal expenditures that encourage development in designated system units; there are system units in the project area.

Question: M.Dunn asked if there can be exemptions from this designation?

Answer: S. Sanderson replied that there is an exemption process but there are certain criteria to be met for that to happen.

S. Sanderson described the contributing problems in the study area: flooding from high tides, spring tides, sunny day tides, and coastal storms. The objectives of this study are to reduce coastal storm damage and increase resiliency of coastal communities. He encouraged the CAC to read the status report that had been posted in April and to provide comment. Solutions the study is looking into includes surge barriers, levees and floodwalls, natural and nature-based features, increasing elevation and land acquisition. An important consideration in the modeling is to not capture and hold upland water behind these potential structures. There are two upcoming public meetings on June 12 and June 26 where engineers and staff will be available for Q and A. It is federally mandated that studies must be completed in 3 years, but this project is too big to meet that requirement and the program has asked for a waiver on this limit. If the waiver is approved, funding will also be made available and the project costs should be completely covered.

Question: A. Kopelman: Does modeling include storm cast?

Answer: B. Bogle: Modeling includes 1-500 year events run with and without project analysis. The bay water is not decreasing as much as other areas because the wind causes movement of the water from one side of the bay to the other.

Question: M. Brown: How current is the data and sea level rise projects?

Answer: B. Bogle: There are 3 sea level rise datasets (low, medium and high). Low uses historic tide gauge data over 50 years, medium is an accelerated curve, and high is a very accelerate curve. The project staff looks at the reduction over 50 years but sea level rise over 100 years. The project should be sensitive enough for low and high tides.

Question: L. Kane: How do you study the path of sand?

Answer: We are not there yet, high ground will have to be stable. We do not want to make an inlet next to an inlet.

Question: L. Kane: Have modeling procedures evolved?

Answer: Modeling out of the North Atlantic Coast work uses data from 2015.

M. Dolan Murphy suggested having additional meetings to include more communities. S. Sanderson replied that if there is demand for more meetings they can be arranged.

Question: M. Dunn: How do you build on a moving sand island, such as Fire Island?

Answer: S. Sanderson: The economics may not allow some alternatives to move forward.

*** Minutes, March 12, 2019**

Motion by L. Kane, to approve the March 12, 2019 CAC meeting minutes; seconded by J. Bird, carried.

3. SSER CAC Logo

At the request of the CAC R. Neville worked with the logo subcommittee to create several versions of a logo. The top 2 logos include a horseshoe crab underwater and the other has a Great Blue Heron with a bridge in the background. The CAC will present these to the Council once the final drawings are completed.

4. Stewardship Award

The subcommittee met once and reworked the forms to make them more user friendly. The application period is predicted to be June 10 – July 31. Comments on the application are due to Maureen Dolan Murphy by the end of the day on May 24th. The Award Ceremony will be in September or October depending on Mike Eagan's schedule. M. Dolan Murphy spoke with Mike Eagan who is agreed to volunteer his boat for the award ceremony. M. Dolan Murphy urged the CAC to use all available outlets to publicize and push the application when it is available. A change was agreed to be made to the application to include NYS agencies in the list of eligible applicants.

5. Jeremy Campbell, South Shore Estuary Reserve Office

Christie Pfoertner reviewed past functions working with Massapequa High School Environmental club during their Awareness Week to reduce plastic straws and marine debris, Long Island Natural History Conference, Seatuck Eco-Carnival, LIISMA Invasive Species Conference, Creek Defenders Day, and Babylon Earth Day. At the Long Island Natural History Conference, Save the Great South Bay took a video of SSER staff and put it on their Facebook page and it was well received. SSER also put together a resiliency forum in the Town of Babylon and is working on two new forums, one with the Jones Beach Power Squadron and one in Quogue Wildlife Refuge. SSER staff is participating in Horseshoe Crab monitoring at two sites and will be reaching out for volunteers during the June dates.

M. Dunn is interested if there is legislation to put limits on Horseshoe Crab harvesting. She also mentioned that a study looking at artificial bait for use on Long Island is looking for funding. C. Pfoertner clarified that the study is looking to explore different types of artificial bait and the efficacy.

M. Dolan-Murphy requested that when SSER puts out a call for volunteers, please send a social media post that CAC members can put on their social media pages.

A. Kopelman asked if there was any previous data for Shinnecock Bay. C. Pfoertner replied that there is no data from previous surveys in that area but several areas around the bay are being surveyed.

R. Neville spoke about SSER monitoring for alewife and noted they had not yet appeared, but a large number of glass eels had been seen. She also described the new outreach materials, and activity book and native plant guide.

S. Kellogg thanked the members of the CAC who volunteered for the A Day in the Life program.

J. Campbell gave the TAC report, the TAC has had 3 meetings thus far and presentations include Alison Branco discussing climate risk analysis and a review of the USGS Coordinated Water Resources Monitoring Strategy.

6. SSER CAC Communications

M. Dolan Murphy described the process for how the SSER CAC can weigh in on local activities. If the SSER CAC decides to have written correspondence, they must do so as the South Shore Estuary Protection Coalition and not as the SSER CAC. General protocol questions were asked and answered. The South Shore Estuary Protection Coalition allows for the CAC to keep their voice and weigh in on issues that are important to the Reserve.

7. Public Comment and Announcement

A. Kopelman – Seal walks are over for the season with about 2,700 encounters. The average seal sighting during walks was 95 with a range from 90-158. Will send whale watching dates.

Judi Bird – May 18th is international migratory bird day from 10am-3pm at Wertheim National Wildlife Refuge.

Marshall Brown – Upcoming Creek Defenders programs in Lindenhurst, Sayville, and with several others planned.

Leslie Kane - The annual shoreline clean up was May 4 and May 5 and half a ton of debris was picked up.

Maureen Dunn – Seatuck participated in the Creek Defenders Penataquit Creek cleanup where approximately 50 people volunteered. It was noted that there was less plastic bag litter than in the past and the creek was cleaner compared to last year's cleanup event. Seatuck received a Trees for Tribes grant, funds from which will be used for the removal of invasive species and the planting of native species. The Ocean Acidification Bill which legislatively continues the Task Force, has passed in the house and is waiting to be signed by Governor Cuomo.

Kyle Rabin – LINAP is launching a STEM competition for grades 6, 7, and 8 which will focus on Long Island Water Quality. The deadline to register has been extended until May 17, 2019. K. Rabin also encouraged attendees to subscribe to the LINAP newsletter if they have not already.

Maureen Dolan Murphy – The July meeting may be a combination of the SSER CAC meeting and the SSER CMP stakeholder meeting. The September meeting will focus on the Suffolk County Blueway trails project.

The meeting adjourned at 9:03 p.m.